1-Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5)1938 Pukapukans

made a right choice. Apparently no chief was ever deposed; hence the reigns of the chiefs of all the lineages must have been, in general, equally prosperous. In accounts of traditional history it is usual to find the chief displaying supernormal powers, bestowed by the god of his lineage.

In former times, as today, great rivalry was felt between the various lineages of the island, especially between those lineages headed by chiefs. Up to the time of the great seismic wave, no chief was superior to the rest. There was, rather, a shifting balance of power between the four chiefly lineages, temporary superiority going to that lineage which through the intrigue, personality, and strength of its chief, combined with numerical strength of its members, managed to gain predominance for the time. The chief of such a lineage would then claim to be the supreme chief of the island. His claim might be disputed, but as long as he was manifestly superior to the other chiefs nothing would be done about his pretensions. It was only after the seismic wave, with its catastrophic effects, that i Tua seems gradually to have assumed a dominance over the other three chiefly lineages. In the inter-lineage adoption that occurred after the seismic wave, a child from the strong lineage of Muliwutu was adopted into i Tua, to insure the continuation of this chiefly line; this seems to have lined up Muliwutu behind i Tua. With this support, i Tua became dominant and constituted itself the lineage of the supreme chief of the island, a status which it has retained to this day. As a lineage of the supreme chief was politically dominant; so were its gods preeminent over the other lineage gods. Matalilki and Tuna, the major gods of i Tua, may thus be considered the major gods of the island; they were most often called upon by the supreme chief to provide favors for the island as a whole. Nevertheless, the other chiefly lineages, particularly those of Ngake, have never completely acquiesced in either the political or religious dominance of i Tua.

Political Control

The functions of the three governing groups on the island may be summarized as follows:

Village meetings (*nukupuna kaha*), attended by the chiefs, sub-chiefs, and all adult males of the village, discussed matters affecting the village and the reserves, and settled intra-village disputes. Meetings of the old men's group (*nukupunonga no te tupele*) discussed island affairs. Meetings of the chiefs (*nukupunonga a te uui ahiki*) discussed island and inter-lineage matters. The division of functions between these governing bodies is not clearly remembered today when the government of the island has been so completely transformed by the resident agent and his nominated Island Council. Informants believed that the supreme chief called the minor chiefs together at unspecified times to discuss matters referred to him by the council of old men (*tupele*). All decisions of the old men were presented to the high chief or the council of chiefs for final approval. Whether or not this approval was nominal depended on the prestige and power of the high chief. Notwithstanding, the final veto seems to have rested with

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

643 645 646 631 623 the chief's executive (*tuvia*), who had the power to say whether a law should or should not apply to the island (p. 387). Decisions were reported (*kate te vananga*) to the several villages in a meeting assembled by a special messenger, called simply *te leo o te aliki* or *te leo o te tupele* (the voice of the chiefs or of the old men). The high chief did not attend the meetings of the old men but sent his representative (*te tulatala no te aliki*), who was commissioned to report the chief's opinions to the old men. It is probable that special meetings of all the people of the island were held on occasion to discuss such a matter as the redivision of reserve land, or the realignment of reserve boundaries. A meeting of this type seems to have been in progress at the outbreak of the civil war (p. 389).

[622 613] The control of village affairs was largely in the hands of the village men. The chief of each village acted as priest in village functions. In theory he devoted his time to the welfare of his people and the control of village works initiated by a decision of the people. The sub-chiefs (*langatila*) were the executive officers, directing village works. Neither chief nor sub-chief received tribute from village or lineage members. Each was fed by his own family group. In island affairs, the chiefs and sub-chiefs were advisory and executive officers, but the real balance of power, in theory at any rate, seems to have been with the old men, who ordered and directed inter-village and island affairs. When the high chief or his executive, who perhaps corresponded to the modern king's prime minister, was an outstanding personality, he might assume for himself many of the powers that ordinarily lay with the old men; these powers would revert to the old men on the chief's death. The governing of the island, therefore, really lay with the group of old men who because of their age and presumed experience were considered better able to order affairs than a chief or his executive.

Sanctions

681 776 [577] Sanctions invoked to deal with most antisocial conduct were not secular, but depended on punishment, usually sickness, sent to the wrongdoer by the gods. Lying was condemned but not punished secularly. Adultery was punished both by the gods and by the wronged person (p. 329).

671 685 682 Thieving from the reserves was punished by the gods. In the reign of the chief Tuliayanga, however, when there was a great food shortage, punishment for stealing was reenforced by group action; the law of *pule pae* (death law) was put into operation and implemented by the guards of the reserves (p. 387). Willful homicide seems also to have been punished by group action, perhaps if it was thought that the gods would be too long in acting. The appropriate punishment was whipping to death. The maternal sub-lineage of the victim was either made the instrument of this punishment or assumed collective responsibility for the crime, though should the homicide shock the community by its barbarity, all the populace might join in the beating (1).

627 671 If one individual should steal from another, the victim was allowed to be his own detective and judge and would proceed to reenforce the punishment of the gods. The injured person or a friend made inquiries and threatened to kill the thief should he be discovered. The thief might pose as a friend and go to look for the missing articles, simulating intense search, but always return with empty hands. The owner of the stolen property might